



Computers on Wheels

the St. Francis of the Fields story...so far

Twelve months ago...

- Two to four desktops in each classroom
- Desktops a mixture of iMac (original blue model and eMacs)
- Limited & mixed capabilities due to age of computers
- Students having little or no computer access
(due to computer numbers and teachers lacking in competence and confidence in how to integrate ICT in student learning in a relevant and engaging way)
- Existing wireless and ethernet network
(all teachers have had an Apple iBook for the last 3/4 years)

Desktop or Laptop?

We chose laptop (Apple Macbooks) for the following reasons...

- More possibility of contexting ICT within the normal curriculum by taking computers into classrooms
- Computers can be used by all students or just a few, while the other computers can be used in the same way in another classroom
- An extra room not needed to become 'the lab'
- No extra wiring needed (initially!)
- We were convinced they would be used to a much greater degree due to their accessibility

Objectives of the ICT program

To give students skills in using and enjoying digital tools including:

- Applications which give new ways to express (and create) ideas or display learning (eg. movies, podcasts, slideshows, animations, graphic organisers/inspiration)
- Communicating and finding information, on the internet (email...constructing emails, opening and organising mail, attachments)
researching (using web browsers, search engines, keywords, ethics, intellectual property)
- Use of Web applications(Web 2.0)...
google apps. (eg.docs, maps, sketchup), blogging, wikis

Also...

- To teach students organisation and storage of files on the school network with saving and retrieving of a variety of files
- To improve teacher competence, confidence and thinking, regards authentic integration of computer technology into the curriculum

One Year On...

- No regrets regards choice of computer as all the reasons held to be right!
- Objectives have been met due to the enthusiasm of students and teachers
- Great learning curve amongst students revealing a great receptiveness
- A great willingness among staff to be educated and to use the computers with their students in as many meaningful ways as possible.

C.O.W. time!

(Organisation)

- Four cows (40 Macbooks)
- Each has a colour (and a name, don't ask), and a number
- This helps students put them away and to locate one if necessary (some work can't be saved on the server so students have to get the computer they have their work on eg. iMovie project)
- ALL classes use them. A timetable is organised for maximum usage and equal access.

Student Use

- Prep...Computer applications such as Photo Booth, Tux paint, Garage Band, Maths software
- 1/2...Saving to server, word processing, adding pictures, iphoto, animations, comic life, internet including, email, jigsaws)
Tasks based on classroom themes
- 3/4...(As above) Internet applications, class blog
- 5/6...Internet apps.(google docs. maps,etc.)
class blog, personal blog for learning

Support...

- All staff had inservicing, scheduled in place of staff meetings over two terms, from Grant Fitz.
- The inservicing involved demonstration of Macbook software to get the most from the laptops

Challenges...

- Powering computers...switch is often tripped
- Training staff to check all computers are being charged when they've finished
- We put in extra wiring...hit and miss!
- Saving heavy loads (such as a whole class saving Comic Life files) across airport base network (too narrow) Arrays can handle heavier traffic, but cost more. The way of the future however!
- Planning for program sustainability